

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

One Man's Legacy

Genesis 50:22-26; Exodus 1:6-11; Exodus 13:17-19; Hebrews 11:21-22

July 10, 2022

For public use: See non-copyright comments at the end of the message.

There are three points in today's sermon:

- For Joseph, home was where his heart was.
- Joseph's earthly fame was soon forgotten.
- Joseph left a lasting impression.

INTRODUCTION: As a reminder, we are studying the life of Joseph. Joseph's parents were Jacob and Rachel. Joseph's grandparents were Isaac and Rebekah, and Joseph's great-grandparents were Abraham and Sarah. Joseph had eleven brothers, the youngest named Benjamin. He also had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

In our series on the life of Joseph, we've covered:

- Some of his family lineage and sins that passed from one generation to the next, such as deception, jealousy, and extreme favoritism.
- Joseph's brothers hated him and sold him into slavery in Egypt.
- Joseph was Potiphar's trusted servant. Potiphar's wife put the move on him, but he did not give in. He avoided the temptation, and she made up a story about him and had him put in jail.
- In jail, he met the Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker. Apparently, they had done something that got them jailed.
- The cupbearer and baker had dreams and Joseph interpreted them. The interpretations came true: the baker was put to death by the king, but the cupbearer was let out of jail.
- The cupbearer did not immediately remember Joseph or help him get out of jail.
- But later, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and predicted a 7-year famine.
- As a result, he was freed and became Pharaoh's second-in-command.
- Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to secure grain during the famine, but Joseph did not reveal himself to his brothers.

- Instead, he devised an elaborate scheme to determine if their hearts had softened.
- When Joseph’s brothers returned a second time with their youngest brother, Benjamin, Joseph honored them with a dinner but still did not reveal himself.
- He tested them again to see how they would treat Benjamin.
- After they passed all the tests, Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers.
- Joseph’s dad, Jacob, also known as Israel, learned that Joseph was alive and, at the request of Joseph and with the blessing of God, moved the family to Egypt.
- Joseph introduced his family to Pharaoh and relocated them to Egypt.
- The Egyptian people traded everything they had, including their freedom, in order to obtain grain from Joseph.
- Here is one of many cultural things in this long narrative that we do not understand: Jacob took Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh as his own, and blessed them. He bucked tradition and gave the younger the greater blessing.
- Jacob blessed all his sons but gave Joseph the choicest blessing.
- Jacob died, and Joseph and his brothers buried him in Canaan.
- Joseph’s brothers thought now that their father had died that he would take out revenge on his brothers.
- Joseph responds to his brothers’ fears with forgiveness.

So now we come to the end of the story:

1-FOR JOSEPH, HOME WAS WHERE HIS HEART WAS

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 50:22-26

Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father’s family. He lived a hundred and ten years²³ and saw the third generation of Ephraim’s children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph’s knees.²⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”²⁵ And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place.”²⁶ So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

EXPLANATION: Joseph lived in Egypt for more than 90 years. Yet even on his deathbed, he recognized that Egypt was not his home. His final wishes expressed his desire to return to the place of God’s promise.

ILLUSTRATION: All of us are familiar with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Parents who are being cared for under their children’s roofs will ask to go home. Patients who have lived in nursing facilities for years will ask to go home. Even seniors who are sitting inside their own houses will ask to go home. In their minds, they are searching for a familiar place, a place of comfort and happy memories. Like Joseph’s story, it’s another reminder that home is not always where we reside. Home is where our hearts abide.

While Joseph lived a life of privilege as an Egyptian ruler, he was never truly free. From the time he was taken into slavery, Joseph never again lived in Canaan. He may have ruled over many people, but he never had complete rule over his own life. Looking at it from an earthly perspective, his story did not end well. He never went home.

APPLICATION: Joseph’s story illustrates a fundamental tenant of the Christian faith that many people misunderstand. If the story does not end well, or the way we feel like it should, then the story is not over. God’s promises are 100% reliable, but God does not usually provide a timeline. We limit God to our human understanding of a lifetime, but God’s clock is eternal. Death did not rob Joseph of his hope. Nothing should rob us of our hope either. As Christians, this world is not our home. No matter how long we live here or how attached we get, there is a better place waiting for us, a place where every promise will be fulfilled. As the old song goes, “This world is not my home. I’m just a-passing through. My treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from Heaven’s open door, and I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.”

1. Home is where the heart is.

2-JOSEPH’S EARTHLY FAME WAS SOON FORGOTTEN

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 1:6-11 and 13:17-19

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, ⁷ but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became

*so numerous that the land was filled with them. ⁸ Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. ⁹ “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. ¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.” ¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor. **Now go to verse 17** When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.” ¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle. ¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the Israelites swear an oath. He had said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place.”*

EXPLANATION: As we discussed in a previous sermon, the political climate of Egypt changed during the course of Joseph’s lifetime. Along with his final wishes, he declared a promise, “God will surely come to your aid.” Joseph had worked with the government long enough to know that things were not faring well for his family. Their freedoms were slowly disappearing. I bet Joseph saw the handwriting on the wall. If they were not in bondage at the time of his death, he knew that the Israelites would one day be. With even more assurance, he knew that God would one day rescue them. The Egyptians enslaved the Israelites, but many years later, Moses led God’s people out of Egypt and granted Joseph’s final request.

ILLUSTRATION: Like Joseph, Charles Thomas Studd spent most of his life on foreign soil. Although he was born into a wealthy British family, Mr. Studd entered the mission field after his college graduation. He spent his life serving the Lord in China, India, and Africa. Both Joseph and Mr. Studd were men of faith who influenced and helped people, and both realized that earthly fame and importance are quickly forgotten.

Despite Mr. Studd’s many years of Christian service, he is not a household name. If you asked an average person living in China, Africa, or India, I doubt they would remember him. Joseph was, by any earthly account, an important Egyptian leader. How many lives did he save as a result of his famine preparedness plan? How many

hours did he devote in the service of the Pharaoh? Still, government officials and common Egyptians quickly forgot who he was and what he did for them.

1-For Joseph, home was where his heart was.

2-Joseph's earthly fame was soon forgotten.

3-JOSEPH LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION

The new government in Egypt forgot Joseph. Many Hebrew people, no doubt forgot Joseph, but Moses and the writer of the book of Hebrews did not forget him.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 11:21-22

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

EXPLANATION: As a man of faith, Joseph's name and story are recorded in Hebrews 11 (the Hebrews Hall of Faith), alongside many other Godly men and women. Joseph's story is extraordinary not because of who he was or what he went through. It's extraordinary because of how he responded. No matter what happened to Joseph, he responded with faith.

Joseph's faith was not dependent on his circumstances. It was not rooted in his environment or grounded in his own good works. While he valued his family heritage, his faith was not contingent upon his family's beliefs or actions. Joseph was a man of faith because Joseph trusted the Lord:

- He trusted the Lord when he was favored by his father.
- When he was mistreated, misunderstood, and disliked by his brothers.
- When he was a slave and falsely accused.
- When he was a prisoner for reasons beyond his control.
- When he ruled in Egypt as second-in-command.
- When he married and had children and reaped the benefits of his hard work.
- When he was reunited with his family.
- When he buried his father.
- When he said his earthly good-byes.

Through the good and the bad, in every season of life, Joseph trusted the Lord.

APPLICATION: Despite the extraordinary aspects of Joseph’s life, he was human just like you and me. But what a legacy he left behind! How many children have listened to the tales of Joseph and his coat of many colors? How many adults have listened to his story and learned about forgiveness? His legacy impacted his family and his descendants, and his legacy also impacts you and me. The world in Joseph’s day may have forgotten Joseph -- and many may have forgotten Charles Studd -- but God did not.

Mr. Studd wrote these lyrics, “Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.” If we want to leave a lasting impression, we need to strive to make an impact for eternity. Joseph was forgotten by the Egyptians, but he was remembered in God’s Word. Mr. Studd may not be a household name, but I guarantee he’s famous in Heaven.

- Home is where the heart is. For the believer, “home” should be heaven – that’s where our hearts should be.
- Earthly fame is soon forgotten. It’s true for all of us.
- Leave a lasting impression.

As is the nature of being a pastor, people tell me private things which remain buried inside of me. A person shared with me how he had been wronged, but how he did his best to be faithful. I told him God is keeping the record book. I am confident that even though the man had been wronged by others, and while many have forgotten his work for the Lord, in the end it will be said that he left a lasting impression.

INVITATION: Colossians 3:23 says, “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.*”

God does not call us all to be missionaries to foreign countries like Mr. Studd. He does not equip us all to serve as government officials like he did Joseph. God made us uniquely and has called to glorify and testify for him in whatever capacity He has placed us, using whatever talents he has given us. If you are a Christian, I want you to think about how you are serving Christ in your day-to-day life.

What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children, your grandchildren, your neighbors, friends, and coworkers? Will they remember you when you are gone, and if they do, what will they remember you for? Maybe you need to come ask God to help you make an impact for eternity. On our own, that's impossible. So, if you do not know Christ, that's the first step. Allow Jesus to forgive you of your sins and renew your life. The altar is open if you want to come pray.

To preachers, teachers, students, and anyone else reading or using this message: I have posted this for all to use as you see fit. There is no need to cite me as the source. You are free to delete sections, add your own, or do whatever you want. There is no copyright. My request is that you do not copyright or sell my work. I am sharing my preaching notes in good faith with you because I know the challenges of putting together a lesson, especially when your week gets consumed with other things. Use it and enjoy!

I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

Find me at www.thbc.com. Click on sermons or YouTube channel: Pastor Paul Gunn
Thanks to Jennifer Anderson for her editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Nashville, Tennessee
USA